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ON PAGE A-1,11

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Amid Protests, House Votes \$--- For Intelligence

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Brushing aside protests that most members had no idea what they were doing, the House overwhelmingly approved a \$ (deleted) authorization bill yesterday for the nation's intelligence community.

The vote was 323 to 43. Five other members voted "present," apparently following the example of Rep. John F. Seiberling (D-Ohio), who complained that the bill authorizes a "blank amount so I intend to vote blank."

The House Intelligence Committee insisted on secrecy for the multibillion-dollar spending measure on the grounds that disclosure of even the total would generate pressure for more details.

The bill, however, is believed to authorize more than \$10 billion in direct and indirect intelligence expenditures for the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency and the rest of the intelligence community, including segments of the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Intelligence Committee Chairman Edward P. Boland (D-Mass.) described the measure as an important, although imperfect, first step. He pointed out that the House has never before adopted a separate authorization bill for intelligence and has always hidden the money in other appropriations.

The 13-member committee had prepared an 83-page "Classified Annex" for House colleagues who wanted to know some details of the bill, including the overall total. But Rep. James P. (Jim) Johnson (R-Colo.), one of the few House members to read the confidential annex, said it was virtually useless.

"The Classified Annex tells us absolutely nothing about what the intelligence community is doing," he protested.

Johnson, a former member of the Intelligence panel who emerged yesterday as the most forceful opponent of the authorization bill, said he feared that Congress was "returning to the days when an elite few members exercised oversight over the intelligence community" and kept too many secrets to themselves.

He said the committee's classified report, for example, was crammed with impenetrable acronyms that made the proposed expenditures virtually meaningless. Meanwhile, he said, lawmakers keep coming across supposedly classified information and "leaks to columnists" in the newspapers almost every day of the week.

"We don't even trust elected officials with even the bare outlines," Johnson said, adding that he resented the notion that appointed officials in the executive branch were somehow safer repositories of government secrets.

Rep. Bill D. Burlison (D-Mo.), chairman of the Intelligence subcommittee assigned to the bill, said that it had made "very substantial cuts" in the administration's requests. "We have not served as a rubber stamp," he assured the House.

In facetious tones, Rep. John L. Burton (D-Calif.) wondered how in the world he could offer an amendment to restore the money the administration wanted when even the cuts were classified.

Boland indicated his committee would try to make more information available to the House next year, but observed that "there are some people who will never be satisfied" with any amount of secrecy.

Rep. J. Kenneth Robinson (Va.), a ranking Republican on the committee, agreed that the panel should try to avoid "excessive use of acronyms" in future reports. But he also pointed out that only eight House members were curious enough about the "Classified Annex" to visit the committee offices and glance at it during the three legislative days it was available.

Over the prolonged protests of some House liberals, the Intelligence Committee also won authority in the bill to require reports next year on "excludable aliens" admitted to this country against the recommendations of the FBI. Boland said the State Department has been prevailing on the attorney general to overrule the FBI repeatedly in such matters.

He said that the committee wants the reports to determine how much of a "problem of counterintelligence" this has created for the FBI.